

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The following message, transmitted through Mr. E. R. McLean, private secretary, was received from his Excellency, the Governor:

Executive Office, State of Texas,
May 18th, 1897.

To the House of Representatives:

House bill No. 157 is herewith returned without approval. It proposes three changes in the law of divorce, authorizing it (1) expressly for habitual drunkenness on the part of the husband, instead of holding it cruel treatment as construed by the courts under the existing statutes; (2) for abandonment on the part of the wife for two years instead of three years under the present law, and (3) for abandonment on the part of the husband for one year instead of three years as now. It is respectfully submitted that these changes in the law would be detrimental to society and should not be made. At the earliest period of our history the present law on the subject of divorce was framed and has answered every reasonable purpose. It has met the demands of half a century of progressive civilization, and at no time has it brought stain or opprobrium upon the State. Broad, elastic and sufficient, as interpreted by our courts, it has kept pace with the needs and social progress of the people, and yet has tended to make marriage a permanent rather than temporary status. Forty years ago the safe limits within which drunkenness should be made ground for divorce was stated by Chief Justice Hemphill in *Camp v. Camp*, 18 Texas, 534, and experience has proven the wisdom of the present statute as thus construed. It is believed that the proposed enlargement of the grounds for divorce by lessening the period of abandonment is equally unwise. Whether regarded in the nature of a civil contract or religious sacrament, marriage is the corner stone of our social fabric. It is the foundation of the advancing civilization of mankind. Every divorce is hurtful to society, and every happy and permanent marriage is a blessing. Easy severance of their ties encourages hasty and inconsiderate marriages, but the knowledge that they will be as durable as the conditions of society will permit will make them in a large measure the result of deliberation and sound judg-

ment. Adherence to laws which have stood the test of time will spare our State the shame of becoming the divorce refuge of adventurers and profligates and tend to make marriage, as beautifully described by Sir James McIntosh, a school of the kind affections and a fit nursery for the commonwealth.

C. A. CULBERSON.